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Message Text

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47
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 FEA-02 INT-08 SCI-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AF-10

SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 IO-14 DRC-01

/142 W
---------- 077241
O R 241702Z JAN 74
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6329
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
USINT CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 2130

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD AND DAMASCUS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, FR, XF
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF MIDDLE EAST WITH QUAI OFFICIAL

SUMMARY: QUAI OFFICIAL EXPRESSED GRATIFICATION WITH THE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN DISENGAGEMENT ACCORD AND THE SECRETARY'S ROLE THEREIN. HE CONTINUED TO BE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT FUTURE STEPS TOWARD PEACE. HE SAID FONMIN JOBERT WILL MAKE ANOTHER TRIP TO THE NEAR EAST IN FEBRUARY AND THAT THE EGYPTIAN FONMIN WILL VISIT PARIS THAT MONTH.
ACTION REQUESTED: THAT THE DEPARTMENT INDICATE WHETHER IT WISHES TO PASS ANY INFORMATION TO JOBERT BEFORE HIS JANUARY 28 VISIT TO SYRIA. END SUMMARY.
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1. DURING A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE NEAR EAST ON JANUARY 23 BETWEEN QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR THE LEVANT ROUILLON AND EMBOF WHICH WAS NOTABLE FOR AN INHABITUAL UNWILLINGNESS ON ROUILLON'S PART TO BE DRAWN OUT ON THE DETAILS OF, FOR EXAMPLE, FONMIN JOBERT'S CURRENT TRIP TO THE AREA AND THE JANUARY 18 BONN MEETING OF THE EC MIDDLE EAST EXPERTS, ROUILLON HAD THE FOLLOWING OF INTEREST TO SAY. HE BEGANTHE CONVERSATION BY UNDERLINING THE QUAI'S AND HIS PERSONAL ADMIRATION FOR THE ESSENTIAL ROLE PLAYED BY THE SECRETARY IN MEDIATING THE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN DISENGAGEMENT, A DEVELOPMENT HE DESCRIBED AS AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP. NOTING THAT IT HAD REQUIRED A THIRD PARTY TO BRING THE NEGOTIATIONS TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION AND THE ROLE THE AGREEMENT ASSIGNS TO UNEF, ROUILLON SAID THESE ELEMENTS OF THE SITUATION TEND TO CONFIRM TWO LONG-HELD FRENCH THESES: DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT AN INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARABS CAN LEAD NOWHERE; ANY SUCCESSFUL MIDDLE EASTERN ACCORD WILL REQUIRE INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES.

2. REVERTING TO HIS MORE HABITUAL PESSIMISM ABOUT PEACE PROSPECTS IN THE REGION, ROUILLON SAID THE NEXT AND SUCCEEDING STEPS WILL BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. ANY BREAKDOWN IN NEGOTATIONS COULD HAVE BLOODY REPERCUSSIONS. HE DOUBTED, MOREOVER, THAT THE ARABS WOULD BE WILLING TO FULFILL THE AMERICAN DESIRE FOR LIFTING THE OIL EMBARGO BEFORE ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ARE EVACUATED SINCE BY DOING SO, THE ARABS WOUD APPEAR TO BE ABANDONING ONE OF THE FEW LEVERS THEY CAN USE AGAINST THE US. HE AGREED THAT THE PRICE OF OIL, RATHER THAN THE BOYCOTT, IS IN REALITY THE STRONGEST ARAB WEAPON.

3. ROUILLON ASKED WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT SYRIAN INTENTIONS AS A RESULT OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO SYRIA. MORE SPECIFICALLY, HE INQUIRED WHETHER THERE IS ANYTHING WE COULD TELL HIM THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN BRIEFING JOBERT BEFORE HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH SYRIAN LEADERS IN DAMASCUS. EMBOFF REPLIED THAT HIS INFORMATION ONSYRIAN ATTITUDES WAS BASED ALMOST CONFIDENTIAL

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ENTIRELY ON PRESS ACCOUNTS WHICH ROUILLON, TOO, HAD SEEN, BUT AGREED TO ASK THE DEPARTMENT IF THERE WAS ANYTHING THAT MIGHT USEFULLY BE PASSED TO JOBERT THROUGH THE QUAI BEFORE HIS JANUARY 28 ARRIVAL IN SYRIA.

4. ROUILLON INDICATED THAT JOBERT WILL MAKE A SECOND TRIP TO THE NEAR EAST IN EARLY FEBRUARY, PROBABLY

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VISITING CAIRO AND BAGHDAD AND, PERHAPS, ABU DHABI.
(QUAI ECONOMIC SECTION PETROLEUM EXPERT CABOUAT, WHO
PLANS TO ACCOMPANY JOBERT, TOLD MINECON JOBERT WILL
LEAVE FEBRUARY 06.) SUBSEQUENT TRIPS BY THE FONMIN
TO THE MIDDLE EAST WILL PROBABLY BE UNDERTAKEN,
ROUILLON SAID. HE INDICATED THAT A VISIT TO ISRAEL WAS
A POSSIBILITY, THOUGH THE FRENCH DO NOT WISH TO BE
PUT IN THE POSITION OF SEEMING TO SEEK ONE. ROUILLON
ALSO SAID THAT WHILE A DATE HAS NOT YET BEEN SET,
EGYPTIAN FONMIN FAHMI WILL VISIT PARIS AND OTHER
EUROPEAN CAPITALS IN EARLY FEBRUARY.
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